

REMARKS

The Office action of December 14, 2010, has been carefully considered.

It is noted that claims 1, 2 and 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the patent to Schunk in view of JP 10298727 the patent to Kimura et al., and the admitted state of the art or the paper by Hitz.

Claims 3-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Schunk in view of JP 727 and Kimura et al. in view of ASA or Hitz, and further in view of US 4912407.

Claims 1, 2 and 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the patent to Schunk in view of JP 10298727 and Kimura et al., and the admitted state of the art or the paper by Hitz, and further in view of JP 06108220.

Claims 3-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Schunk in view of JP 727 and Kimura et al. in view of ASA or Hitz and JP 220, and further in view of US 4912407.

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicant has amended claims 1 and 11. Support for the changes can be found in Fig. 1 of the application.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions and methods disclosed in the references.

Turning now to the references and particularly to the patent to Schunk, it can be seen that this reference discloses a process for stabilizing a strip in a plant for coating strip material.

JP 727 discloses a device for hot dip coating metal strands.

The patent to Kimura et al. discloses a vibration control apparatus for a steel processing line.

JP 220 discloses a method of controlling coating weight.

The Examiner combined the first three references, with or without the fourth, in determining that claims 1, 2 and 7-11 would

be unpatentable over such a combination. Applicant respectfully submits that none of the references, nor their combination, teach a method and device for hot-dip coating a metal strand, as in the presently claimed invention. The references do not teach sensors arranged completely spaced from the inductors in the direction of the center line of the guide channel, arranged above a vertical midpoint of the inductors and not connected to the inductors, as recited in the amended independent claims now on file. Kimura et al. teach sensors arranged no closer to the center line of the guide channel than a smallest distance of the inductor from the center line. There is no teaching of sensors spaced completely from the inductors in a direction of the center line of the guide channel, as in the presently claimed invention. Furthermore, there is no teaching by the references that the sensors are not connected to the inductors. In JP 727 the sensor is directly attached to the inductor. In JP 220 the sensor 4 in Fig. 1 is directly attached to the inductor 3 and is not spaced completely from the inductor in the direction of the center line of the guide channel. These are not features which would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art based upon the teaching of the cited references. The only suggestion to arrange the sensors as argued by the Examiner to arrive at the present invention, is the teaching of the present application, which of course is

impermissible hindsight reconstruction.

Additionally, the references do not teach, either alone or in combination, sensors arranged above a vertical midpoint of the inductors, as in the presently claimed invention.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 7-11 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over a combination of the above-discussed references is overcome and should be withdrawn.

US 4,912,407 has also been considered. This reference adds nothing to the references discussed above so as to suggest the presently claimed invention. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is overcome and should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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